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ne had almost forgotten, the old man stood with a rigid gaze rivetted on his tormentor. Every word struck like a red-hot arrow on his heart, and when she ceased, the horrible and hysteric laugh that burst from him, would have wakened pity even in her breast, had she waited to witness it. Rushing forward with an almost supernatural firmness, he turned into the adjacent garden, where he entered a hut built as a residence for a watchman to protect the fruit, and where a gun was always left loaded. The moment following, a report of a musket being heard, the domestics rushed to the spot, who discovered their aged master lying lifeless on the earth, the contents of the piece having passed directly through his heart.

M'C.

### THE USEFULNESS OF BIOGRAPHY.

"No study," says Johnson, "can be more delightful or more useful than biography—none can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition."

This powerful attraction, which biography must hold over the mind, arises chiefly from the peculiar applicability of each trifling incident to the circumstances and condition of the reader; we feel the probability of being ourselves, at some period or other, placed in a position similar to that of the person whose life is treated of, and, therefore, the narrative excites our special and particular attention, inasmuch as whatever approximates more closely to our own interests is calculated to affect us more sensibly. The pleasures and advantages derived from history and biography are of a different kind—history relates the affairs and events of communities; biography the several actions of individuals. History takes a wider and more extended range, and thus furnishes models by which the public conduct of states may be shaped; biography a narrower and more minute one, and thus affords a standard whereby to regulate the affairs of private men. History tells us of Alexander, as the mighty hero of Macedon, who marched over the extensive plains of Asia, overcame Darius in several engagements, rendered all nations subject to his power, till he had no more countries to subdue, and till the sea alone was able to set boundaries to his conquests; biography more clearly represents him as a man united to us by the common ties of humanity, influenced by the same passions, acting upon the same motives, subject to the same infirmities, and performing all his achievements by the same instruments as ourselves. In the Alexander of history we see the monarch, decked out in his royal vestments, and strutting along proudly upon the vast theatre of the world; in the Alexander of biography we see him behind the curtain, the sparkling of the diadem is gone, the majesty of the sceptre is removed, and he walks along, as one of ourselves, unadorned by the adventitious splendour of attire, or unaided by the accessory exaltation of the dramatic buskin, which tended to magnify him in our view. This characteristic peculiarity of biography arises necessarily from the contractedness of its sphere—in proportion as the variety of topics on which it has to touch are less numerous, so the accuracy with which it can treat of those which it does allude to is the more minute; in history our minds are distracted by the multiplicity of events, and the diversity of characters that are brought before us—we hurry over sieges and battles, the variations of governments and the demolition of states, and thus have not time to stop and examine the separate characters of individual men, which are the chief subjects upon which biography dilates; just as in gazing over a wide extent of country, when the eye can see no limits, the very boundlessness of the prospect prevents us from at once remarking the beauty or deformity of some particular sub-divisions, so, amid the generalities of history, we are unable to analyze complex relations, and though we may draw from them useful lessons, as to the working of governments and the philosophy of states, yet we cannot with facility discover that minute individuality of character by which men are distinguished from one another. History, in fact, is the

mine stored with a number of precious gems, but their very variety prevents us from carefully examining the intrinsic value of each. Yet, after all, the intellectual advantages resulting from biography are not to be supposed greater than those resulting from history; if either was to be taken exclusively, no doubt history should be preferred, inasmuch as it gives a more varied and diversified store of general information, and thus affords a greater scope for the exercise of the mental powers, in examining the connection between cause and effect, on a large and extended scale; but biography is chiefly valuable as a supplementary source of pleasure and improvement, where we are not lost amid a multitudinous array of circumstances, but where we can, at leisure, retire from the noise and bustle of public transactions, to view the more minute and perfect development of human character, and the remoter springs of human action, when uninfluenced by the voice of crowds, or unagitated by the tumults of passion.

W.

### THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES.

There is nothing which stands so much in need of restraint, and upon which, unfortunately, restraint is so seldom imposed, as the inordinate desires of the human heart. With justice may that heart be likened to the fabled vessel of the Danaids, which, though every effort was used to fill it, stood continually dry; for, satiate all its appetites, gratify its every wish, something will still be wanting—it will still be craving more.

The folly of indulging in immoderate desires may be simply exemplified by the consideration, that if our wishes (as is frequently the case) are unattainable, nothing can be more absurd than to form them; and again, if they are easily attainable, what pledge or what surety have we that gratification would result from their accomplishment? Do we not know from experience that enjoyment begets satiety, satiety disgust? We have read that Alexander, after triumphing over the whole habitable world, shed tears because there remained no new worlds for him to conquer. And, in like manner, though our wishes needed but to be expressed to be gratified—though the objects of our desires waited on our nod—yet would we go on to the end of the chapter, forming new and artificial appetites when the old ones were appeased, and find ourselves at last a miserable prey to discontent and dissatisfaction. But, besides folly, there is also impiety in yielding to our immoderate desires: though we have not the power, yet have we the wish to disturb the settled order of nature's laws; and, indulging the cravings of our diseased imaginations, we would presume even to direct the hand of Providence to the accomplishment of our mad ambition.

Let us then check this vice, when alone it can be checked, namely, in its infancy; and let each of us, looking upon this world with the eyes of a Seneca, use those memorable words which dropped from his lips at Athens, when, turning from it in disgust, he said—"How many things are here which I do not want!"

B.

### THE GARDEN ROSE.

A garden rose was seen to droop down from its tender stalk,  
By a little child, that playfully was sporting on the walk;  
The child admired its beautiful hue, and as he gazed he thought,  
He'd like to have the lovely thing, 'twas with such fragrance fraught.

He drew him near, 'twas blushing with maturity of bloom,  
And all the air was laden with the sweets of its perfume;  
He plucked it—with a sudden cry he cast the flower away,  
For, closely hid beneath its leaves, a piercing thorn lay.

The rose was scattered on the ground, its loveliness was gone,  
The little child was crying now at what the thorn had done.  
Weep not, fair child, nor deem it strange, for older ones than thou

Have often felt the secret thorn, that thus has hurt thee now.

Look life throughout, its pleasures thus are pleasing to the view,  
But, like the rose, a thorn is couched beneath their lovely hue;  
Then weep not, weep not, little child, that thus thy hand is torn,  
The honey bee still bears a sting, the fairest rose a thorn.

W.